

Our
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with
Japan



By
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OUR RELATIONS WITH JAPAN

Observations Occasioned by a Recent Visit to Japan.

THE Vanderlip party which recently visited Japan was organized by Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip on the invitation of the so-called Welcome Association, composed of a group of gentlemen prominent in the public and business affairs of Japan. One of the chief objects of that Association is, by affording opportunities for the acquisition of exact information and by friendly exchange of views, to promote cordial relations between Japan and America. The leading spirit in the Welcome Association is Baron Shibusawa, who is well known in this country. Although now 84 years of age and retired from business, he continues very actively engaged in promulgating liberal ideas, and is indefatigable in all kinds of good works designed to improve the welfare of the Japanese people. He and the large element of the people that he represents are strong advocates of peace among the nations of the earth. Recent criticism in America of Japan's national policy led the Welcome Association to invite Mr. Vanderlip to select a group of representative Americans to go to Japan and look into the facts. The Vanderlip party was, of course, unofficial. It came in close contact, however, not only with the American Embassy in Japan, but also with leading members of the Japanese Government. If it had had official functions it could not have received greater hospitality than it did from the social, business and official world of Japan, and it was afforded the most unusual opportunities to obtain information concerning all questions which are of mutual interest to Japan and America.

During our visit in Tokyo a conference was held every morning for six days, at which subjects of international interest were discussed. These conferences were

attended by all of the members of our party. Baron Shibusawa and Mr. Vanderlip were the joint chairmen. Viscount Kaneko usually presided, as he understood both the Japanese and the English languages. Besides these, Baron Megata, Baron Sakatani, Mr. Fujiyama, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Tokyo, Dr. Soyeda, Mr. Sumoto and a number of other men prominent in public and business affairs in Japan, some being connected with the government, were present. After our visit to Tokyo, we visited Yokohama, Kyoto, Osaka, Kobe, Nara and Nikko, and at these places, as well as at Tokyo, members of our party came in contact with the leading Japanese citizens and freely discussed with them Japanese affairs. These included Prime Minister Hara, Viscount Uchida, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Prince Yamagata, Count Okuma, Baron Goto, Baron Mitsui, and many others who are now influencing public sentiment in Japan.

We were all impressed with the desire of Japanese statesmen to make an effort to conciliate American public opinion. They gave us detailed information, and we found the leading members of the government remarkably candid in explaining what had taken place in the Orient during the great war, and in stating what was to be the future international policy of Japan.

With a short acquaintance with the Oriental situation, it would not be wise to be too dogmatic in proposing a solution of the complex problems with which Asiatic nations are wrestling. Observers of Oriental politics are too prone to become either pro-Chinese or pro-Japanese, with the result that unconsciously, perhaps, they distort the facts and arrive at conclusions which are in accordance with their predilections. While the extraordinary hospitality extended to us by the Japanese, and undoubtedly inspired by sincere feeling, has inclined us to the most friendly feeling not only for the leaders whom we met in different parts of Japan, but also for the Japanese people, who gave many evidences of friendship for America, personally I do not feel that that circumstance

ought to interfere with our arriving at a discriminating judgment upon some of the underlying conditions which affect our two nations.

The Friendly Attitude of the Japanese People and Their Leading Statesmen.

Our discussions with leaders of thought in Japan were marked by the greatest candor on both sides. Many of these leaders did not hesitate to admit that Japan had made mistakes, particularly when they were speaking of acts for which their political opponents were responsible, for internal politics plays a large part in Japan even in matters affecting international relations. But it was generally added that mistakes were to be expected in the conduct of the affairs of a nation which had been developing its modern civilization for only three-quarters of a century. Upon many matters, however, the Japanese with some insistence claim that the rest of the world has been misled through an inadequate understanding of the facts and of the Oriental environment. They are tolerant of differences of opinion concerning their national policy, and are more than willing to disclose what they claim to be the facts; but they are extremely sensitive when action by other nations, and particularly by America, is predicated upon a supposed inferiority of their race; and when one has seen the remarkable development in the economic and industrial life of Japan, the solidarity with which the Japanese people pursue their national aspirations, the effective manner in which they are cultivating the modern arts of civilization, and the importance which they attach to universal education of the people, one is not surprised that the people of Japan expect to be ranked as among the nations of the earth who have reached the highest point of civilization, precisely as they are now recognized as one of the powers of the world.

Immigration and the California Land Question.

It is the reaction which has followed the assumption by America of racial superiority that has caused more irritation than many of the other questions, more important to us, which have been the subject of international discussion. The Japanese have felt that they have not only been treated as inferior to Americans, but also to other people less advanced than they, who are permitted to enter the United States under restrictions milder than those imposed on them. There seems to be no expectation (or any very strong desire) on the part of Japan that we should change our Oriental exclusion policy. But we found a considerable amount of irritation on account of the manner in which California has been recently dealing with the land question, in its effort to prevent Japanese residents of that state from acquiring agricultural lands. This question should not be confused with the general immigration exclusion policy of the United States, which is embodied in the "Gentlemen's Agreement," negotiated by Mr. Root, and which is being faithfully observed by Japan, nor does the complaint of the importation of "Picture Brides," who are soon to be entirely excluded, cut much figure. The Japanese are not a colonizing people—their love of their native land is too intense for that. Japan's statesmen seem to be willing at present to keep as many of her nationals as they can in the Archipelago or in Formosa or Korea, or if they must be colonized, to send them, as they are now doing, to those other parts of Asia which are near at hand and are being developed with Japanese capital.

But in California an effort is being made to prevent Japanese who are permanent residents, although not citizens, from acquiring control, through leases or by transfer to their minor children, of agricultural lands. The proposed legislation based on initiative petitions now in circulation, and the political agitation which it has aroused, have been marked by exaggerated and inflamed

statements concerning Japan and the Japanese. I do not mean to enter upon a discussion of the merits of the land question in California. It would not be wise for one to attempt this who is not a resident of that state and has not studied on the ground the facts. But it would seem clear that under the present arrangement with Japan there is no danger of a Japanese inundation, which, for one, I am clear should be effectively guarded against.

In the first decade of this century, 8,785,000 immigrants arrived in the United States from all countries. Only 62,432 of these were Japanese, that is, about three-fourths of one per cent. of the whole. There are now about 100,000 Japanese in this country. Further immigration under the "Gentlemen's Agreement" is not a menace, for in the six years between 1908 and 1913, inclusive, when it was in effect, there were more departures of Japanese than arrivals.

Nor does the California land situation seem so desperate as to justify a disturbance of international relations. The Japanese now own 28,000 acres of farm land in California and cultivate under lease or contract, perhaps 250,000 acres more. However their competition may affect California farmers with whom they come in contact, certainly the presence in California of perhaps 40,000 Japanese, who have reclaimed much of the poorest land in the state and economically have been of great benefit to its commercial interests, is not a peril to the 2,615,000 Americans residing in a state having 29,000,000 acres of arable land.

The complaint in California is not that the Japanese are lacking in efficiency or character, but rather that they are so industrious, so frugal, and so prosperous that American farmers are not able successfully to compete with them. In certain of the agricultural districts, and particularly in the Sacramento Valley, it is said that they are seeking to obtain a monopoly in desirable land, which they cultivate intensively, and that, under the advice of American lawyers, in order to defeat the legislative policy

of the state, they have purchased lands in the name of their minor children. They have probably been badly advised in pressing their legal rights against the current of public opinion, and as a result discriminatory legislation is now threatened. One of the proposed bills denies the right of any citizen to lease land for any purpose whatsoever to a Japanese under the penalty of confiscation. Another, in order to defeat the purposes of Japanese parents in putting land in the name of their children, proposes to remove Japanese children from the guardianship of their parents and force them under the guardianship of the public administrator.

The title to land, or any other matter of local administration or domestic interest, is, of course, primarily a matter for regulation by the state legislature or by the people themselves. Many states of the Union and many nations, including, I believe, Japan, discriminate in matters of land titles against aliens, and this has always been regarded as sound public policy. But the complaint of Japan is that a single state of the United States, with much acerbity aroused by political discussion, is discriminating against the nationals of Japan alone, and that they are doing it where, legally speaking, the discrimination affects the rights of minor children who are by birth Americans and who, upon becoming of age, will be entitled under our Constitution to the free and untrammelled enjoyment of their rights of property. Some of the acts proposed to be submitted to a referendum have been couched in language implying with unnecessary vigor the inferiority of the Japanese race. These have been resented by leaders of liberal Japanese thought, who are, however, entirely sympathetic with an orderly effort to settle the Japanese land question in a way satisfactory to California.

The Local Situation in California Should Not Be Permitted to Disturb Our Friendly Relations With Japan. An International Commission Suggested.

Whatever the merits of the California land question, and however the Japanese residents of that state deserve the drastic legislation proposed by the referendum, the fact remains that a situation affecting a comparatively small number of California citizens is affecting, and threatening still more to affect, the friendly relations between two great nations. While the interests of the people of California must, of course, be sedulously protected, something also is due to the country at large so that an issue fraught with danger to our international relations may not be unduly pressed. What is needed is a fair hearing of both sides of the controversy before some tribunal authorized to investigate the facts as a basis for treaty provisions finally disposing of the matter. I have found considerable support (even in California) for the idea that such a tribunal should be a joint high international commission. The findings of such a commission, based on a thorough investigation, both in this country and in Japan, of all the facts, would have much weight. It might also become a suitable agency for settling other troublesome questions, such, for instance, as that relating to language schools in Hawaii, Oriental immigration generally, and any other matters which cannot be conveniently settled through the ordinary diplomatic processes.

I hope that the idea of an international commission will receive the public discussion it deserves. While ordinarily international questions ought to be arranged through diplomatic negotiations, it would be difficult for diplomatic representatives to make an investigation of the complex facts of the California situation; nor would their conclusions carry the weight in that state which would attach to a report of a commission authorized to

investigate every phase of the subject in both countries; and only through such a commission could the investigation be freed from the inflammatory effect of local political exigencies.

The So-called Oriental Mind.

It has been a common assumption in this country that the Oriental mind is mysterious and inscrutable. Most of us who have dealt with Oriental questions spasmodically and indolently, have found this assumption convenient in explaining international episodes which we have had neither the inclination nor the facilities for thoroughly investigating. A closer acquaintance with Oriental people, however, has led me to the conclusion that their mental processes are not essentially different from ours. It is true, of course, that their viewpoint is affected by national customs, religion, historical traditions, inadequate knowledge of conditions existing in distant parts of the earth, and, more than all of these, by the difference in the language, for the difficulty in conveying ideas is fraught with much greater danger of misunderstanding than is incident to intercourse with nations whose language, being more nearly allied to ours, can be much more readily acquired than the bewildering Chinese ideographs, and the complicated Japanese language which is largely based upon them. Assuming that the Oriental way of looking at things is due to these conditions, it makes it desirable, if we would avoid international misunderstandings, that we should make a special effort to overcome the difficulties in the way of complete mutual understanding; and the California situation makes it particularly desirable that such an effort should be made, especially as it is difficult for the Japanese to understand how the local interests of a limited class in a single state of the United States can be permitted to threaten the friendly relations between the two nations.

The Shantung Question.

The Shantung province has a population of about thirty millions and is sanctified to the Chinese people because it contains the grave of Confucius. It contains on the seacoast the district of Kiao Chau which comprises about twenty square miles and before the war had been leased to Germany for a long term. Tsing Tau, the city within the district, was made an attractive and flourishing modern city during the German occupation.

At the outset our Japanese conferees were inclined to urge that there was no such thing as a Shantung question, and that there could be no controversy except as to Kiao Chau and Tsing Tau. Upon our explaining that an impression was widely prevalent in this country that Japan was seeking by indirection to obtain the sovereignty of the entire Shantung province, we received ample statements concerning the facts and the future policy of Japan.

Japan's Policy in Shantung Since 1914.

It would have historical interest, if space permitted, to review the facts relating to Japan's military campaign for the reduction of Kiao Chau and her subsequent treaty arrangements with China concerning her future relations to that district and the economic concessions in the Shantung province. Such a review would probably afford evidence that elation over the victory over the German forces and belief that military control of the Shantung province by Japan was desirable, had led powerful elements in Japan to dream of sovereignty and to manoeuvre to accomplish that end. Extreme demands, subsequently modified, could be pointed to which show in the early years of the war lack of constancy, if not of sincerity, in dealing with the situation. But it is to be remembered that these things took place when the attention of the nations of the world was focussed not

upon negotiations (some of them secret) between China and Japan, but upon the efforts of Japan to co-operate with the Allies in defeating Germany and destroying her military power in the east. Shifting internal Japanese politics at that time had much to do with the policy of Japan and if we would not be misled we should give much more weight to the more recent attitude of the Japanese government when the Shantung question, by reason of the Versailles Treaty of Peace, became the concern of the great powers of the world. For the practical situation is that Japan has obtained the insertion in the Peace Treaty of the Shantung provisions, but only upon her assurance that she would not seek to impair the sovereignty of China in the Shantung province and would, as speedily as possible, enter into negotiations with China for a settlement of the Kiao Chau situation and all questions growing out of the economic concessions in the province originally granted to Germany. In this connection the statement of President Wilson to the Senate Committee will be recalled.

Japan's Assurances That Shantung Was to be Returned to the Sovereignty of China.

He said that his understanding with the Japanese delegates in Paris was "that Japan should return to China in full sovereignty the old province of Shantung so far as Germany had any claims upon it, preserving to herself the right to establish a residential district at Tsing Tau which is the town of Kiao Chau Bay; that with regard to the railways and mines she should retain only the rights of an economic concession there with the right, however, to maintain a special body of police on the railway, the personnel of which should be Chinese under Japanese instructors nominated by the managers of the company and appointed by the Chinese government. I think that is the whole of it * * *. She has promised not to

retain any sovereignty at all." Japan did not fix any time for the return of Shantung further than to say that it should be as soon as possible, and the President added that "We relied on Japan's good faith in fulfilling that promise."

In August, 1919, Viscount Uchida, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, stated to the press that Japan did not have any intention to retain or to claim any rights which affect the territorial sovereignty of China in the province of Shantung.

Prime Minister Hara at about the same time made a similar statement and added that "for the restitution of Kiao Chau detailed arrangements should be worked out beforehand in common accord between the Japanese and Chinese governments and that the length of time required for such arrangements depends largely upon the attitude of China. In any case, we fully realize that it is as much in our interest as in the interests of China to accelerate the conclusion of all needed arrangements and to effect without unnecessary delay the restitution of leased territory which we have solemnly undertaken."

Finally, in an official statement embodied in correspondence between Japan and China, the Japanese Foreign Office on June 14, 1920, reiterated its "desire and intention to effect a restoration of Kiao Chau to China and to settle matters incidental thereto." This statement contained the following unambiguous declaration:

"Second—That it is the intention of the Japanese Government to withdraw its troops from along the Shantung Railway as a matter of course upon agreement between the two governments regarding the disposition of Kiao Chau. In fact, the Japanese Government wishes to withdraw its troops as speedily as possible, even before an agreement is entered into, but, in the absence of any competent force to assume the duty of guarding the railway after evacuation, it is constrained

to keep those troops temporarily stationed there to insure the security of communications and safeguard the interests of Japan and China, who are co-partners in a joint enterprise."

It was added "Repeated declarations of the Imperial Japanese Government leave no room for doubt as to the singleness of purpose with which Japan seeks at the earliest date a fair and just settlement of the question."

Attempts by Japan to Negotiate With China.

Japan has repeatedly attempted to take up with China the adjustment which is obviously necessary; and apparently the delay in making a final settlement is due to the difficulty in procuring China, which so far as a national government is concerned is practically acephalous, to function at all in relation to foreign affairs. The fact seems to be that the Chinese delegates went to Paris to procure from the Peace Commission an arrangement for the return to China of both the Shantung province and the Kiao Chau district, not only without any impairment of its sovereignty rights, but also freed from all engagements previously made with either Germany or Japan concerning economic rights and concessions. Whatever mistakes Japan may have made with reference to the Shantung question, and however grasping it may be said that she has been in extorting from China unfavorable treaties, China can hardly justify herself to the world, now that the light of publicity is thrown upon the whole situation, in refusing at least to enter upon a negotiation for an adjustment of this troublesome question.

The Situation Created by the Treaty of Peace.

The repeated assertion by Japan that, under Articles 156, 157 and 158 of the Versailles Treaty of Peace, they do not claim to have acquired any political rights in any

part of the province, except in a limited way in Kiao Chau, does not entirely allay unfriendly suspicion among many people in this country. By the Treaty the political and economic rights and powers formerly possessed by Germany, to which, under the Treaty, Japan succeeds, include an interest in the railroad running from Tsing Tau, the seaport, to Tsinan-Fu, the capital of the province, a distance of about 170 miles, and this involves the supervision, even where there are only economic rights, which pro-Chinese critics assert will by gradual encroachment ultimately be converted into political control. At present, actual control is exercised through the maintenance of a Japanese military force, not only in Kiao Chau, but also along the entire line of the railroad. How far the maintenance of order makes this military control necessary it would probably be difficult to ascertain. The Japanese continue to assert, however, through responsible statesmen, as well as through such representative citizens as we talked with, that Japan proposes to withdraw her troops as soon as that can be done with safety. Japan has already offered to China to make the railroad a joint enterprise, in the benefit and management of which the two nations should equally participate, but this, and indeed all of Japan's suggestions concerning a settlement of the Shantung controversy for months remained unanswered. It is said that the tenure of office of the present Chinese Government is so precarious and its personnel is so weak (to say nothing of the fact that it exercises hardly more than a nominal control of the great Southern provinces), that it does not dare to make response lest it should give cause for its ejection from office or a revolt against its authority. The government did announce with some irrelevance that it was unable to enter negotiations for the return of Shantung because China had not herself been a signatory of the Peace Treaty. But the real reason for China's delay appears to be that there is no governmental authority in China sufficiently confident of its own position to trust itself even to enter into negotiation. Japan's

last note expressed again a willingness to arrange the details of a settlement at any time that China might be ready, and the significant request was repeated that China expedite the organization of a police force for the Shantung railroad so as to permit Japan to withdraw its troops. In the official statement of the Japanese Foreign Office, already referred to, it is stated that the Chinese Government delayed for three months to make a reply to the request of Japan that negotiations be entered into, and finally made the reply, which was little more than a request for delay, with the statement that "the people throughout China have assumed an indignantly antagonistic attitude toward the question. For these reasons, and also in consideration of the amity existing between Japan and China, the Chinese Government does not find itself in a position to reply at this moment." It is very difficult from this language to know what China intends to do, although a reference is made in her response to the fact that she is proposing "to effect a proper organization to replace Japanese troops in order to secure and maintain the safety of the whole line." In the official statement the Japanese Foreign Department refers to "a fundamental agreement * * * between China and Japan as to the disposition of the leased territory of Kiao Chau," probably referring to the treaties between China and Japan of 1915 and 1918, the obligation of which China seems to be ignoring.

The Japanese Government has made its negotiations with China public for the purpose of laying its case before the world. Certainly something more is needed from China before it can be justly said that it has made out its case against Japan with reference to Shantung. Indeed, it yet remains for her to state to the world what she does seek to accomplish in Shantung and Kiao Chau. Her present position is by no means clear.

Japan Will Probably Make Good Her Promises Concerning Shantung.

However true it may be that Japan in 1914, for the purpose of reducing Kiao Chau, marched her troops across Shantung peninsula, against the formal protest of China, never, however, very seriously pressed; however sinister may have been the implications from the twenty-one demands made by Japan on China in 1915; to whatever extent some of the Japanese governments which have been in office since 1914 have yielded to the demands of the military party that a Japanese hegemony over the Shantung peninsula be established; whatever truth there may be in China's claim that the treaties concerning Shantung between China and Japan in 1915 and 1918 were the result of coercion exercised by Japan; and however inconsistent may have been the statements made by Japan and her statesmen in 1914 as to the ultimate disposition of what was acquired in Shantung as a result of the military campaign—whatever, I say, may be the real truth with reference to all of these matters, it seems fairly certain now that the views of the liberal element in Japan, influenced no doubt by the public opinion of the world and aroused by the discussion of the Peace Treaty, will prevail in its insistence that the sovereignty of China outside of the Kiao Chau district shall not be impaired, and that even within that district the arrangement for the protection of Japanese interests shall not be extended beyond the terms of some arrangement with China, recognized by the world as reasonable under the circumstances.

During Mr. Lansing's term of office as Secretary of State there was a tendency to return to a policy with reference to Oriental matters substantially similar to that of Secretary Knox of a decade ago. Thus, the consortium of banking groups represented by Mr. Lamont, organized for the purpose of giving financial assistance to China, had the moral backing of our government. Japan was a

participant in the consortium. Furthermore, the Lansing-Ishii agreement recognized the fact that by reason of propinquity and of political interests, Japan had a peculiar relation to Asiatic matters. Under such circumstances it is hardly probable that the United States will object to Japan seeking economic advantages in Asiatic countries. The propriety of her seeking such advantages in Shantung is expressly recognized by the Treaty of Peace, to which she is a party, by which, although against the protest of China, all of Germany's interests in Shantung, both economic and political, passed to Japan. To this arrangement, as I have pointed out, President Wilson also, in behalf of the United States, gave his assent, obtaining from the Japanese delegates definite assurances that Japan proposed in due time to surrender all sovereign rights in the Shantung peninsula. Thus, by the formal agreement of Great Britain and France, the principal European nations having interests in Asia, of Germany herself, and of all the other signatories to the treaty, and by the action of the United States government, a record has been made giving Japan a peculiarly strong case for retaining a substantial economic interest in the Shantung province.

While the military party in Japan may conceivably regard lightly assurances such as these, and may insist that where national existence is at stake they must be disregarded, there are other forces at work, both internal and external, which will probably lead Japan to make good her promises. These forces are: first, the gradual but sure increase in the power of the liberal element in Japanese politics; second, the reluctance of not only this element but also of the military party itself, to do anything which will offend against the prevailing sentiment of the world powers or affect the friendly relations with other nations of the earth; and, third, a hesitation to incur the hostility of China to such an extent as to interfere with trade relations with that country. The eyes of the world are on Japan in Shantung and she can ill afford to

obtain advantages at the cost of sacrificing the good opinion of the western powers; and that she may suffer commercially is even now being brought forcibly home to her by the boycott of Japanese goods now seriously affecting her trade with Northern China.

Japan's Good Faith.

There are, of course, many who place no confidence in Japan's good faith, who assert that economic concessions in China are merely the precursors of political encroachments eating into the sovereignty of that country; and they point to Korea and to the tardiness of Japan in withdrawing her military forces from Siberia, Manchuria, Mongolia and Shantung. They also assert that Japan is unduly persistent in pressing her economic advantage wherever she has concessions, for the purpose of excluding the trade of other nations: in other words, that she is in practice nullifying the so-called open-door policy with reference to Oriental trade. It is said that in Shantung the military control of the railroad is now being used to discriminate against all merchants except the Japanese and that this is being accomplished by such devices as railroad rebates, delays in shipments, etc., which were familiar in our railroad transportation a generation ago. But if Japan confines herself to trade competition it is hardly conceivable that America will attempt to correct her methods at the risk of international complications, although the position of America as one of the Pacific powers, gives her a legitimate interest in events that may affect the territorial integrity or the political independence of China, and, therefore, we may well concern ourselves with the purposes of Japan in Siberia, Manchuria and Mongolia.

If the President had accepted the League of Nations with the Lodge reservations, convenient machinery would have been provided for making effective the protest of

the United States concerning the Shantung provisions. But those provisions have now gone into effect by the consent of the other great powers. In the absence of a ratification of the Treaty by the Senate, the protest of that body amounts to nothing. The State Department could, of course, record its protest and exercise its moral influence to induce Japan to surrender the advantages it has already gained under the provisions of the Treaty. Whether it will ever do so is at least problematical. But in spite of the technical strength of Japan's position, arising from these facts, it does not appear, as I have pointed out, that she intends to insist upon her legal rights.

Japan's Occupation of Asiatic Countries.

In Siberia, and to a lesser extent in Manchuria, Shantung, and Mongolia, the occupation by Japan began as a move in the military situation. At first this was a defensive measure in the northern countries, made necessary by the fear that Germany might break through Russia, seize China and then attack Japan. Later the Bolshevik menace, practical anarchy in Siberia, and the weakness or the absence of Chinese governmental authority in the Manchurian and Mongolian provinces threw upon Japan the burden of maintaining by military force, law and order in all of the territories mentioned. To a considerable extent these conditions continue to the present day. Japan asserts that her troops cannot safely be withdrawn from any of these countries as there is no other nation willing or able to make the expenditure necessary to procure an orderly administration of government in the interval before normal conditions can be restored. There is undoubtedly a large measure of truth in this claim. To what extent the necessity for military occupation is being exaggerated cannot, of course, be readily ascertained. It is doubtful whether evidence is obtainable which would be convincing to everybody upon

this point. For the present, therefore, we can do nothing but accept Japan's assurances and await developments. In the meantime, however, it may be that we shall hear of recurring episodes in the military administration of the occupied territory giving evidence not only of rigor but also pointing to an apparent intention to make the occupation permanent. Furthermore, there will undoubtedly be obstacles in Japan itself in making good the present assurances of the government that territorial acquisition is not intended. Under any form of government there is always a fundamental difference of opinion between civil and military officials as to methods of administering civil affairs in occupied territory during a period between war and peace. We had an experience illustrating this when we were establishing a civil government in the Philippines, and differences of opinion as to methods of "benevolent assimilation" between the military commanders and the Philippine Commission led to considerable friction. The difficulty in such a situation is accentuated in Japan by the still powerful influence of the military party in matters of state policy, and also by the difficulty of prompt communication with military commanders at distant places. Instances will no doubt be repeated of such commanders dealing harshly with natives and others, and perhaps the influence of the military party at home will exempt them from adequate discipline for their officiousness.

But despite such difficulties as these, the liberal party in Japan is gradually gaining ascendancy in political affairs; and the wisest men among the military group itself no longer believe that Japan can pursue a course of territorial aggrandizement at the risk of war with other powers. On this party the great war has had a sobering effect not only in showing what may happen to a militaristic nation which ignores the public opinion of the world, but also in its demonstration of the military power of the United States when fully aroused. In this connection it is pertinent to say that I did not dis-

cover any substantial basis for an apprehension of war between our two countries. The statements periodically occurring in our sensational press upon this subject appear to me to be utterly without foundation. Our reception by masses of people in the large cities and the expressions of the most influential journals, which devoted much space to the movements of our party and made copious comments upon speeches made by its members, showed that the Japanese people are much more interested in American affairs than we are in Japanese affairs; and every indication was that they are essentially friendly.

The Improbability of War.

Unfortunately, there is an appreciable number of Americans both in this country and in Japan who believe that war between the two countries is inevitable, and they point to certain preparations in Japan as indicating an aggressive policy on her part. But such investigation of these matters as I was able to make led me to the conclusion that the preparations referred to were defensive in character and were no more elaborate than the exposed position of Japan in the Pacific Ocean made reasonably necessary. There is no party in Japan which, from the standpoint either of inclination or of national policy, seriously contemplates war with America. All organized political parties seem to agree that the cultivation of cordial relations with this country is the best public policy for Japan. In this connection the words of Mr. Roosevelt, uttered in July, 1918, come back to me. He said:

“Japan is playing a great part in the civilized world; a good understanding between her and the United States is essential to the international progress, and it is a grave offense against the United States for any man by word or deed to jeopardize this good understanding.”

Japan is becoming more and more a democratic nation. The manhood franchise has been greatly extended. The interest of the people in public affairs is obvious to even a casual observer. On May 11th last I was a witness to a manifestation of such interest in Kobe. In perhaps a dozen places in that city I saw crowds obstructing the streets where bulletin boards were displayed showing the returns of the election the day before to the Diet—the lower house of the National legislature. Such political consciousness as this indicates is reflected in the Japanese press whose wide circulation shows a demand for detailed news items and such free comment upon public affairs as fill their columns. It is not improbable that the mass of the people are taking a growing interest in politics as they are in industrial affairs; and as 95 per cent. of them are literate it is not probable that this interest will abate. Now, the common people of Japan do not want war. They are intensely occupied with their internal affairs; and I am satisfied that this attitude will go far to neutralize the belligerent feeling that may exist among those who still adhere to the militaristic policy, and particularly the young and enthusiastic army and navy officers looking for a career.

It is unfortunately the fact that under the Japanese form of government the ministers of war and of the navy are not removable as a result of changes of political administration, and they are thus to some extent beyond the reach of public opinion. Still, this fact will not probably long prevent the evolution of a liberal policy under which the militaristic influences in governmental administration will be gradually diminished. This will also naturally curb imperialistic ambition for the acquisition of territory, particularly on the Asiatic continent.

Necessity for Territorial Expansion.

But all this is not to say that Japan will not some time extend her territorial possessions, if that becomes

necessary to satisfy her national needs, particularly in feeding and clothing her people and in obtaining raw materials which are required in her essential industries. If China, America and the western powers who have an interest in Oriental affairs, refuse to recognize these needs, Japan will, despite all objection, be driven to supplying them. Her population is growing at the rate of 600,000 a year and the most ordinary considerations of prudence require that she should protect her people against the evils of overcrowding her already densely populated islands. That she wishes to accomplish that result by dismembering China is by no means clear, but that she seeks to obtain an economic foothold in Manchuria, Mongolia, Shantung and perhaps Siberia, as a means of procuring raw materials, and that she will encourage her people to emigrate to those countries, is not only probable but seemingly justifiable. If this aspect of the situation is dealt with sympathetically from the viewpoint of Japan's national necessities, a settlement of pending Asiatic questions will become more simple, particularly as never before has Japan been so sensitive to adverse criticism of her imperialistic tendencies as she is now. The friendly intervention of America in these matters would not be resented; and we occupy a position which would enable us to be of substantial service to civilization in eliminating possible causes of international trouble in the Orient.

June 26th, 1920.

HENRY W. TAFT.

The Origin of the Japan Society

Thirteen years ago some 700 Americans, including many of New York's most prominent citizens, honored the arrival in this country of two Japanese warships at a banquet at which Ambassador Viscount S. Aoki, General Baron T. Kuroki and Admiral G. Ijuin were the guests of the evening.

As a result of this spontaneous expression of America's feeling of cordiality and good will toward its Western neighbor, the Japan Society had its origin. The old saying "Time will Tell" again proved true, for around the small group of men who organized the Society in May, 1907, there has grown a membership of some 1,500, about 1,200 of whom are Americans.

Through the broad distribution of its Trade and News Bulletins, informative books, pamphlets and questionnaires throughout the United States; through the circulating library, the Information Bureau, the Travel Department and by means of illustrated lectures, the Society is accomplishing a work of international importance.

And so, out of the visit of the two Japanese warships there was conceived an American organization whose peaceful mission it should be to bring more closely together the peoples of two great nations, one in the East, the other in the West.

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